PERSIAN RUGS

OF THE SO-CALLED

POLISH TYPE

YOE

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THE DOGE MARINO GRIMANI RECEIVING THE PERSIAN AMBASSADORS IN 1603, BY CALIARI IN THE DUCAL PALACE, VENICE

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

LOAN EXHIBITION OF PERSIAN RUGS OF THE SO-CALLED POLISH TYPE

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INTRODUCTION

A NUMBER of knotted silk rugs enriched with gold and silver, from the collection of Prince Czartoryski, were shown in the Trocadéro at the Paris Exhibition of 1878. As some of them were embroidered with the coat of arms of the noble Polish family of Czartoryski, these rugs were regarded as the work of Polish looms. For many years the designation "Polish" persisted, and it was believed that these rugs were made at Sluck in Poland, where a certain Mazarski, who had spent considerable time in the East, established a manufactory in 1757, famous for its beautiful silk sashes brocaded in gold and silver with designs borrowed from Persia and Turkey. Riegl[1] was the first to doubt the theory of a Polish origin for the Czartoryski and similar rugs, and he recognized from their style that they must be earlier than the eighteenth century. Following Riegl's investigations further, Bode[1] and Martin[2] discovered sufficient evidence, both artistic and historical, to prove that these rugs were Persian and of the seventeenth century. The arguments advanced did not, however, convince some students of Oriental rugs, especially those of Poland, and in 1911 an article appeared by Krygowski[3] in which he again took up the old theory of the Polish origin of these rugs. According to Krygowski, such rugs were made in Poland by weavers imported from Persia, who modified the familiar Oriental patterns and color schemes to accord with European taste. In support of his theory Krygowski stated that specimens of these rugs had been found in no Asiatic country but only in Poland, and that Persian dealers never regarded them as of Persian manufacture. On the contrary, the fact is that "Polish" rugs have been

[1] See References Cited.

[2] History of Oriental Carpets; see also Pope, International Studio, vol. 76, pp. 535–544.

[3] Orientalisches Archiv, vol. II, pp. 70 ff., 106 ff.

found not only in Poland, but also in Italy, Germany, Denmark, France, and Turkey. A comparison of these silk rugs with woolen rugs actually made in Poland, which Krygowski reproduced, shows great differences in design and color scheme. One of the woolen rugs, dated 1698, has a pattern entirely European in style. Others, with or without coats of arms of Polish families, are Oriental in character and more closely related in their designs to Turkish rugs than to the "Polish" rugs in dispute. Krygowski's views have not been accepted, and at present no one doubts that these rich rugs are of Persian origin, although the term "Polish" has continued to be used as a convenient designation for this type of Persian rug.

About three hundred "Polish" rugs have been recorded. In American private collections there are many important examples which are but little known to the general public or even to students. The most magnificent collection, consisting of fourteen rugs, is owned by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who has generously lent them for this special exhibition. Supplementing these are three rugs owned by the Museum and ten excellent examples lent by the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia, Horace Havemeyer, Mrs. Rainey Rogers, and Mrs. William H. Moore. Its indebtedness to these lenders the Museum gratefully acknowledges. Through their aid this exhibition, the first of its kind, has been made possible, offering to collectors and students of Oriental rugs an excellent opportunity to become acquainted with an important and luxurious type of Persian rug of the first half of the seventeenth century or slightly later.

Technically, "Polish" rugs may be divided into three main groups: (1) knotted rugs, (2) tapestry-woven rugs, (3) embroidered rugs. The first group can be further divided into two classes: (a) rugs knotted with silk only, and (b) rugs knotted with silk and brocaded with silver and silver-gilt metal strips wound around silk threads. All types, except the embroidered rugs, are represented in our exhibition.

The technique of the knotted "Polish" rugs is similar to

that of other Persian rugs (see page xi). The knots, of silk, are tied over two warp threads, of cotton, in such a way that the knot completely encircles one warp thread of the pair and emerges between the two; the other end of the knot comes to the front outside the second warp thread. This knot is called the Persian or Sehna knot in distinction to the Ghiordes or Turkish knot. After each row of knots a weft of three shoots follows, two of which are stretched; the third, the middle one, is loose. The two stretched shoots are of cotton and the loose wavy shoot is of silk. The stretched shoots divide the warp threads into two layers.[4]

In most "Polish" rugs two techniques (pl. VIII), knotting and brocading, are ingeniously combined. To every row of knots (see page xi) there are five brocading shoots lying between two wavy weft shoots. The brocading shoots, consisting of silver or silver-gilt strips wound closely around a white or a yellow silk core, form a continuous thread carried over three and under one of the upper layers of warp threads. By passing the metal threads over three warp threads the weavers of "Polish" rugs obtained large surfaces of glittering metal, which in time wore off so that in many rugs only the silk cores remain. Brocading in knotted rugs was also practised in the sixteenth century, as in the famous hunting rug in Vienna,[5] in which the brocading shoots pass alternately over and under one warp thread. The knotting of the "Polish" rugs is coarser than that found in other Persian silk rugs. They have, with few exceptions, from 170 to 264 knots to the square inch. Two of the Rockefeller rugs (nos. 1, 2) have 440 knots to the square inch, an exceptionally large number.

The "Polish" tapestries, or *kilims*, have no pile and are woven entirely of silk. The weft threads pass alternately over and under single warp threads, so that both sides look alike. The edges of adjacent color fields are interlocked (pl. VII), thus avoiding the slits which are so characteristic of the Turkish *kilims*. Gold and silver strips are wound around many of the colored weft threads, often so loosely

[4] Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. I, figs. 3–7.
[5] Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. I, pls. 1–5.

that the thread is not entirely concealed. In some cases the silver is untarnished, probably owing to an alloy used by the Persians. The tapestry weave is not without tradition in Persia. Recent researches and discoveries in Central Asia furnish us with tapestry-woven silks as early as the Sasanian period,[6] which show patterns analogous to those of Sasanian damasks.

There is a great variety of patterns in the "Polish" rugs, which we may classify as follows:

(1) Medallion rugs. In this class of "Polish" rugs there is a central medallion varying in shape, with sections of medallions in the corners. A notable example of this class is a rug in the Treasury of St. Mark's, Venice.[7] The central medallion has a blue ground and is surrounded by a band forming an ogee-shaped compartment, which recalls a silk rug belonging to the Altman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum (Gallery K 33). Medallion rugs are represented in the exhibition by several examples. The tapestry rug lent by the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia (no. 23) and the rug in plate VI have oval medallions with attached cartouches in the center and medallion sections in the corners. The tapestry-woven rug (pl. III) lent by Horace Havemeyer has a large eight-pointed lobed medallion in the center. Such a division of the field occurs on some of the finest sixteenth-century woolen rugs of Persia. Rug number 5 has, besides the central medallion, other panels of oval or circular shape and sections of medallions with varying ground colors. In a number of rugs (nos. 11–14) the medallions are formed by arabesque palmettes in various colors.

(2) Compartment rugs. In this class of "Polish" rugs the field is divided into many compartments, which either form an all-over pattern or are grouped symmetrically around a central panel. Four of the rugs in the exhibition (nos. 1, 2, 16, 17)[8] have fields divided into large four-sided compartments formed by wavy bands overlaid with cloud

[6] Pfister, Revue des arts asiatiques, vol. VI, pp. 1–23.
[7] Pasini, pl. XCI; Ravà, Dedalo, vol. I, pp. 125–130.
[8] Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. II, pl. 43.

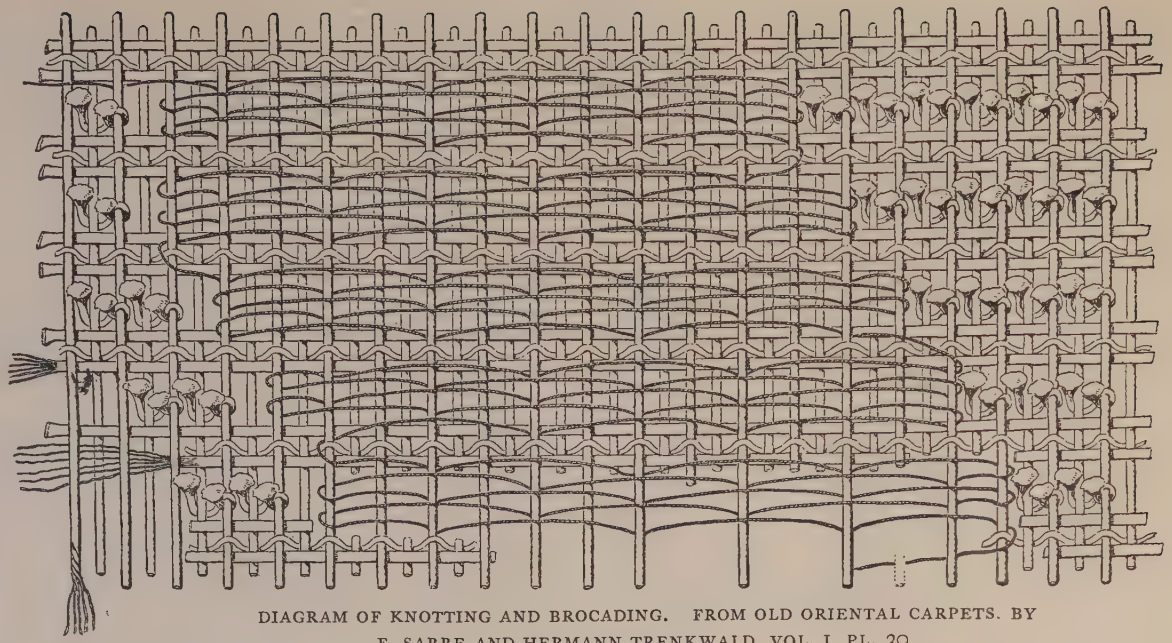

DIAGRAM OF KNOTTING AND BROCADING. FROM OLD ORIENTAL CARPETS. BY F. SARRE AND HERMANN TRENKWALD, VOL. I, PL. 30

motives and separated from each other by stylized floral motives. The fields of two other rugs (nos. 3, 4) are divided into rows of many-sided compartments, which differ in color. This division of the field is very similar to that of a woolen rug in Gallery D 3, lent by Horace Havemeyer. The field of this rug is divided into cartouches, which are further subdivided into smaller compartments containing floral scrolls and palmettes. The Havemeyer rug, which belongs to a group of floral rugs related to the so-called vase rugs, may be assigned to the beginning of the seventeenth century. The division of the field into an all-over pattern of compartments occurs on several Persian sixteenth-century rugs. A typical example is the compartment rug in the Metropolitan Museum (Gallery D 3).

In other rugs of this class the division of the field is effected either by wavy bands or by arabesques which define compartments often of irregular shape. Characteristic of this type are numbers 9, 10, 13, and 14.[9] In the center of each field is a small medallion in light green, from which issue bands in orange and blue forming compartments, each of which contains a small oval panel formed by two half-palmettes in contrasting colors. In some rugs of this type there is no clear division of the field, except that certain sections outlined by arabesques and scrolls show different colors; for instance, number 13 and a rug in the Altman Collection (Gallery K 33). Such field divisions have no precursors in Persian art of the sixteenth century and are peculiar to "Polish" rugs.

(3) Rugs with symmetrical floral and arabesque patterns. In this class of "Polish" rugs the floral and arabesque scrolls issue from the center of the field, which is indicated by a small panel, coat of arms (no. 24), or rosette (no. 26; pl. V). A good example in this exhibition is number 15 (pl. I). Similar in style is the Liechtenstein rug in Vienna,[10] which shows a symmetrical arrangement of several intersecting systems of floral scrolls and arabesques.

(4) Rugs with repeat patterns. In this class, the pattern

[9] Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. II, pl. 44.
[10] Sarre and Martin, vol. I, pl. 56.

covers the rug evenly, without a centrosymmetric composition. Characteristic examples are the rugs in Skokloster Castle, Sweden, and one in the Austrian Museum, Vienna.[11] The all-over pattern of these rugs consists of large palmettes connected by short stems and arranged in several rows. A more elaborate rug of this type is the Coronation Rug in Rosenborg Castle, Copenhagen.[12] There are four vertical rows of a design composed of floral scrolls bearing leaves, large rosettes, palmettes, and cloud bands in polychrome silk on a gold ground. Number 23 in the exhibition, lent by the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia, shows an arrangement of design similar to that of the Coronation Rug. Another specimen of this class is illustrated in plate II. The design is here continuous horizontally and finished at the top and bottom.

The decorative motives common to all these classes consist of arabesques, floral scrolls with palmettes, rosettes and blossoms, shrubs, cloud bands, animals, birds, and human figures. Popular motives are the floral scrolls which generally cover the entire field, including the various compartments. The scrolling floral stems bear leaves, large and small palmettes, and blossoms, which usually intersect arabesques and form a dense, almost overcrowded pattern. In a number of "Polish" rugs, especially of the tapestry-woven variety, there are only floral scrolls symmetrically arranged. The floral motives of the *kilims* are generally treated with greater naturalism than in the knotted variety. The floral scrolls issuing from various motives bear a great number of curved lanceolate leaves and large palmettes. The lanceolate leaves, so characteristic of "Polish" rugs, are familiar from seventeenth-century floral rugs attributed to the looms of Herat.[13] In the rug illustrated in plate V there are several systems of arabesques and scrolls, some of which issue from the center or near it; others have their starting points outside the field.

[11] Martin, History of Oriental Carpets, pl. IX; Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. I, pl. 30.

[12] Martin, History of Oriental Carpets, pls. VII, VIII.

[13] Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. I, pls. 13, 14.

Three "Polish" rugs, in Skokloster Castle, in the Austrian Museum, and number 18 (pl. II) in our exhibition, are decorated with palmettes only, the scrolls being omitted.

In some of the tapestry-woven "Polish" rugs appear floral motives of infrequent occurrence among the traditional Persian types. For example, in the border of number 27 (pl. VI) tulips are introduced and in that of number 19 (pl. III) carnations. These two flowers are usually associated with Turkish art. This might lead to the erroneous belief that these *kilims* were products of Turkish not Persian looms, were it not that other rugs and silk fabrics undoubtedly of Persian origin also show the tulip and the carnation. Among the gifts brought by the Persian embassy to the Duke of Holstein Gottorp in 1639 is an embroidered rug[14] with tulips introduced in both the field and the border. As to the carnation, it is found in several Persian vase carpets and related floral rugs.[15] The carnation also occurs occasionally in Persian brocades and velvets of the seventeenth century. One of these brocades is in the Moscow Armory and bears the coat of arms of the Venetian Republic.[16] Another brocade of this type is in the Metropolitan Museum.[17]

The representation of human beings, animals, and birds is rare in the knotted "Polish" rugs, but quite frequent in the *kilims*, as may be seen in rug number 23. The center of this *kilim* shows a Chinese motive of a fight between a phoenix and a dragon. Lions and tigers appear in the border of this rug. An example of the knotted rug with animal decoration is in the Residenz Museum, Munich.[18] Here, as in some of the silk rugs attributed to Kashan, of which the Metropolitan Museum possesses one of the finest examples (Gallery K 33), are several rows of animals, single or two attacking each other. Also in the Residenz Museum is the most magnificent example of the *kilim* with hunting

[14] Martin, History of Oriental Carpets, pl. XII.
[15] Martin, *op. cit.*, figs. 182, 184, 185, pls. XVI, XX.
[16] Martin, *op. cit.*, fig. 161.
[17] Dimand, Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum, vol. XXIV, p. 116.
[18] Sarre and Martin, pl. 55.

scenes,[19] recalling the famous sixteenth-century hunting rugs in Vienna and in the Rothschild Collection in Paris.[20] From the composition and the costumes of the figures one might easily be inclined to date this tapestry rug to the sixteenth century, but the vivid color contrasts, landscape details, and floral motives with naturalistic tendencies point rather to the first half of the seventeenth century. Historical evidence (p. xvii) also indicates the later period.

The borders of the so-called Polish rugs are decorated in various ways. A popular border design, showing intermittent wavy scrolls with large palmettes, may be seen in the rug illustrated in plate IV, in which each of the main palmettes is flanked by two curved lanceolate leaves. Scroll patterns of this type appear in numerous "Herat" rugs of the seventeenth century. Other border designs (*e. g.*, no. 15; pl. I) continue sixteenth-century traditions. The division into compartments, which was noted in discussing the field designs, is also found in the borders of several carpets (*e. g.*, no. 23). In three of the Rockefeller rugs (nos. 5, 9, 10) the arabesque bands define compartments which inclose rosettes. A reciprocal pattern of trefoils sometimes occurs in the borders and the edgings.

The splendid decorative effect of the so-called Polish rugs, both of the knotted and the tapestry-woven varieties, is greatly enhanced by the rich and brilliant colors, and the lavish use of gold and silver. To describe the magnificence of these color schemes is not an easy task. One must see them to enjoy fully the beauty and sumptuousness which dazzled European courts. The variety of the colors introduced in the field and border designs is often so great that the structure of the design, always clearly defined in sixteenth-century Persian rugs and sometimes in later rugs, is obscured. In general the colors are lighter and more brilliant than in other Persian rugs. Pastel shades prevail, but they are usually balanced by passages of deeper, purer color. Favorite colors are salmon red, ruby red, green, orange, pink, brown, violet, and various shades of blue.

[19] Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. II, pls. 47, 48.
[20] Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. I, pls. 1–5; vol. II, pls. 24–26.

Typical examples, delightful in color, are four rugs (nos. 1–4) lent by Mr. Rockefeller. Two (nos. 3, 4) recall in the division of their fields and in their colors the Havemeyer compartment rug exhibited in Gallery D 3. The desire for a rich polychromatic effect also leads to frequent changes in the colors of the motives. The wide range of colors employed by the weavers of these so-called Polish rugs is admirably seen in magnificent carpets (see nos. 5, 6) from the Rockefeller Collection, in which all the favorite shades of yellow, green, red, brown, and blue are introduced on grounds of gold and silver. Not always, however, are the colors so varied. In some rugs certain hues predominate over others, combining into delicate color effects.

Judged from the style, the "Polish" rugs must be assigned to the first half or the middle of the seventeenth century. The most common motives of "Polish" rugs, such as leaves, both naturalistic and lanceolate, and the large arabesque palmettes with cloud motives, are characteristic of Persian decoration of the seventeenth century. In addition to the "Herat" rugs of the seventeenth century, the decoration of the palaces of Ispahan, especially the Chahil Sutun and Ali Kapu, built in the time of Shah Abbas (1587–1629), furnish numerous parallels to the ornament of the "Polish" rugs. In the painted stucco decoration of the rooms of the Ispahan palaces we see the merging of the traditional Persian designs with the new naturalistic tendencies, a baroque exaggeration of motives, and an abundance of details. These characteristics appear also on velvets, brocades, lacquered doors, boxes, and mirrors. The Museum possesses a pair of doors (on exhibition in Gallery E 14) supposed to have come from the palace of Chahil Sutun at Ispahan. The panels of the doors are decorated with garden scenes and bordered by wavy scrolls with palmettes and numerous curved lanceolate leaves in rich colors on a gold ground.

Besides these similarities of style there are documentary evidences for assigning the "Polish" rugs to the first half or the middle of the seventeenth century. The earliest known "Polish" rug thus documented was brought to Venice in

the beginning of the seventeenth century. In 1603 a Persian embassy headed by Fethy Bey arrived in Venice, bringing many valuable gifts from Shah Abbas to the Doge of Venice, Marino Grimani.[21] This Persian embassy, one of the most splendid sent to Venice, is commemorated in a painting (frontispiece) by Gabriele Caliari in the Sala delle Quattro Porte of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice. Among the gifts presented by the Persians were a rug knotted in silk, gold, and silver, a coat of gold brocade, a velvet with a representation of the Madonna and Child, and other silks. Two other Persian embassies came to Venice, one in 1613 and one in 1622. The latter, led by the Persian ambassador, Sassaur, presented among other gifts four silk rugs, three of which are today preserved in the Treasury of St. Mark's.[22]

In 1639 an embassy from the Shah of Persia brought many valuable gifts to Duke Frederic of Holstein Gottorp, consisting of Persian brocades, velvets, and six precious silk rugs which later were transferred to Rosenborg Castle, Copenhagen.[23] The finest specimen is the so-called Coronation Rug, described and illustrated by Martin. Four of these rugs in Rosenborg Castle are embroidered in brilliant colors and were used as hangings.

In the Residenz Museum at Munich there is a magnificent tapestry-woven carpet with hunting scenes. This and other *kilims*, including one with a Polish coat of arms, were a part of the dowry of a Polish princess, Anna Katharina Kostanza, on her marriage to the Elector Palatine Philip Wilhelm in the year 1642.[24]

Of historical importance is rug number 20 from the collection of Mrs. Moore. On the back of it is a Polish inscription written in ink, containing the name of the owner, Wilkonski, the date, September 12, 1683, and the place of provenance, Vienna. In 1683 the Polish king, Jan Sobieski, came to the rescue of Vienna, which was in danger of

[21] Ravà, Dedalo, vol. I, pp. 125-130.
[22] Pasini, pls. XCI, XCII.
[23] Martin, History of Oriental Carpets, pls. VII–XIV.
[24] Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. II, pls. 47, 48; Sarre and Martin, pls. 60, 62.

Turkish occupation. The Polish victory resulted in rich booty consisting of Persian and Turkish rugs and silk fabrics used for the decoration of tents. The inscription proves without doubt that this rug was taken from the Turks at Vienna. Many Persian rugs and textiles which later became a part of the collection of the royal house of Saxony have the same provenance. A large Persian velvet carpet of about 1600, now in the Metropolitan Museum (Gallery D 3), comes from this collection, and, according to tradition, was captured in 1683 at Vienna.

The majority of "Polish" rugs have been found in European countries, but one, published by Pope,[25] was recently discovered in Persia. It is preserved in the mausoleum of Shah Abbas II at Kum, where it is used as a tomb cover. On one of the smaller silk rugs around the sarcophagus is an inscription: "Work of the Master Na'amat'ullah of Jushagan, in the year 1072 or 1082" (A.D. 1661 or 1671).

The scarcity of "Polish" rugs in the East, the peculiar color schemes, the coats of arms of European families, and the historical documents lead to the conclusion that they were woven in imperial factories especially for European sovereigns and nobles, either to their order or more frequently as gifts of the shahs.

Silk rugs and *kilims* with gold and silver threads were also used in Persia during the seventeenth century at the court and in the houses of nobles, but whether they were similar to the "Polish" rugs, it is difficult to ascertain. On a tapestry rug in Berlin[26] which is similar to rug number 23 appears the word *Padishah*, which indicates that it was made in a Persian court manufactory for the shah. Sir Thomas Herbert, who traveled in Persia from 1627 to 1629, in the time of Shah Abbas, describes the rooms of the palace of Ispahan as follows: "Within, the rooms . . . are arched, enlightened by trellisses; the rooms embossed above, and painted with red, white, blue, and gold; the sides painted with sports and landscape; the ground, or floor, spread with carpets of silk and gold, without other

[25] Pope, Kunstchronik und Kunstmarkt, n. s. vol. 35, pp. 311 ff.
[26] Sarre and Trenkwald, vol. II, pl. 45.

furniture . . . ."[27] Tavernier, the French merchant, writes about his reception at the court of Ispahan on December 29, 1664: "After I had expos'd my Goods upon a fair Table cover'd with a Carpet of Gold and Silver, and that the *Nazar* had dispos'd every thing in order with his own hand, the King enter'd, attended only by three Eunuchs for his Guard, and two old men, whose office it was to pull off his Shooes when he goes into any Room spread with Gold and Silk Carpets, and to put them on again when he goes forth."[28] The great hall of the palace of Ispahan was also covered with costly silk rugs. "In the middle of the Hall was a Vase of excellent Marble, with a Fountain throwing out Water after several manners. The Floor was spread with Gold and Silk Carpets, made on purpose for the place; and near to the Vase was a low Scaffold one Foot high, twelve Foot long, and eight wide, cover'd with a magnificent Carpet. Upon this Scaffold sate the King upon a four-square Cushion of Cloth of Gold, with another Cushion behind him cover'd with the same, set up against a great Tap'stry-Hanging, wrought with *Persian* Characters, containing the Mysteries of the Law."[29]

The production of "Polish" rugs probably started in the time of Shah Abbas the Great (1587–1629), the noble patron of arts and crafts, who established closer connections between Europe and Persia. The floral rug in the Treasury of St. Mark's, presented in 1603, is definitely of this period. The Rogers (pl. I) and Liechtenstein rugs (see p. xii), likewise, are probably of the time of Shah Abbas. Most of the "Polish" rugs, however, were probably made in the time of Shah Safi I (1629–1642) and Shah Abbas II (1642–1667).

Most authorities consider Kashan or Ispahan the place of manufacture of knotted "Polish" rugs. Recently Pope[30] advanced a theory that these "Polish" rugs, as well as the vase rugs, were made at Jushagan, near Ispahan. His

[27] Herbert, p. 128.
[28] Tavernier, p. 177.
[29] *ibid.*, p. 178.
[30] Pope, Kunstchronik und Kunstmarkt, n. s. vol. 35, pp. 311–312.

arguments are only partly convincing, although it is evident that there is a relation between "Polish" rugs and vase rugs. The pattern of the "Polish" rug in Kum shows pairs of vases with blossoms and other motives which appear in vase rugs. But whether both types of Persian rugs were woven at the same place is disputable. Silk rugs with brocading in gold and silver were products of luxury and it may be assumed that they were made in royal manufactories such as existed in Kashan, Yezd, and Ispahan, which were famous for their brocades. In the chapter on the first of three orders, or states, of Persia and the king's household in Ispahan, Tavernier tells us about the silk and carpet manufacture: "The *Karkrone* is the House for the Royal Manufactures, where the Gold and Silver-Carpets are made, as also those of Silks and Worsted, together with Tissues, Velvets, and Taffeta's."[31] This passage seems to indicate that both silk weaves and silk rugs with gold and silver were made in the manufactories at Ispahan.

The tapestry-woven "Polish" rugs have been attributed by Martin to the looms of Darabjird in southern Persia. His attribution is based on Karabacek[32] and on Hammer, who in his history of the Ottoman Empire describes the Persian embassy to Adrianople in 1560.[33] Among the gifts presented by the ambassador were silk rugs of Hamadan and Derjesin, mats of Djehrem, light silks of Yezd, heavy silks of Kum, and tapestries of Darabjird. According to Pope, silk *kilims* of this type may also have been made in Dehaj, between Ispahan and Yezd, where there is a local tradition of the production of *kilims* as fine as brocades.

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[31] Tavernier, p. 223.
[32] Page 108.
[33] Martin, Die persischen Prachtstoffe, p. 12.

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CATALOGUE

PERSIAN RUGS OF THE SO-CALLED POLISH TYPE FIRST HALF OF THE XVII CENTURY

1 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: curved bands form rows of four-sided compartments separated from each other by stylized floral motives. The compartments inclose floral stems with palmettes of various sizes, leaves, and rosettes in white, yellow, brown, pink, salmon red, green, blue, silver, and gold on dark blue, salmon red, silver, or gold grounds.

Border: on a silver or gold ground an intermittent wavy scroll bears alternately small palmettes and large palmettes flanked by two lanceolate leaves. The inner edging contains a wavy floral scroll on a blue ground; the outer edging, a wavy floral scroll on a yellow ground.

Several of the compartments and many of the motives in the field are brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk.

L. 13 ft. 1 in.; w. 5 ft. 8 in.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

2 Rug Knotted in Silk

Companion rug to number 1.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

3 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: the main field is divided into numerous irregular compartments filled with floral scrolls, forming an all-over pattern. The scrolls bear palmettes, rosettes, and lanceolate leaves in white, yellow, orange, pink, salmon red, brown, blue, and green on yellow, salmon red, green, brown, silver, or gold grounds.

Border: on a ground of silver or gold appear floral scrolls bearing palmettes and curved leaves. The inner edging contains a wavy floral scroll on a light blue ground; the outer edging, a wavy floral scroll on a brown ground.

The ground of the border and of some of the compartments in the field is brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk.

L. 13 ft. 3 in.; w. 5 ft. 8¾ in.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

4 RUG KNOTTED IN SILK

Companion rug to number 3.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

5 RUG KNOTTED IN SILK

Field: a central medallion in red incloses a medallion formed by arabesques in blue and green on a gold ground. Above, there is a lobed oval medallion; below, at the edge of the field, is a section of a round medallion; both are filled with arabesques in white, pink, and blue on a gold ground. In the corners and along the right and left sides of the field are sections of medallions ornamented with arabesques. The field has a pattern of floral scrolls bearing palmettes and lanceolate leaves in yellow, pink, orange, red, blue, brown, and green on a ground of silver or gold.

Border: on a red ground floral scrolls bearing palmettes and leaves intersect arabesques. At intervals there are green compartments inclosed by arabesques. The inner edging contains trefoils in yellow-green and purple; the outer edging, a floral scroll on a dark blue ground.

The ground of the field is brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk.

L. 13 ft. 3 in.; w. 5 ft. 8¾ in.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

6 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: a large central medallion incloses a coat of arms showing a yellow cross and four birds in blue within the shield and the head and neck of a camel or horse as the crest. The arms, which have not been identified, are repeated in the four corners of the field. The ground (gold or silver) is covered with arabesques and floral scrolls bearing palmettes and large lanceolate leaves in yellow, pink, brown, black, blue, and green.

Border: on a silver ground arabesques interlace with floral scrolls bearing palmettes and lanceolate leaves. The inner edging contains floral scrolls on a green ground; the outer edging, floral scrolls on a dark blue ground.

The ground of the field and of the border is brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk.

L. 15 ft. 9 in.; w. 7 ft. 1½ in.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

7 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: a central medallion formed by lobed blue lines has attached horizontally and vertically half-medallions with green and salmon red grounds. In the corners of the field there are sections of medallions in brown. Other compartments are formed by lobed bands in blue and gold. The central medallion and the sections of medallions inclose cross devices of arabesques in white, yellow, blue, green, and salmon red. The rest of the field is covered with floral scrolls bearing palmettes and leaves in yellow, orange, red-brown, green, black, and blue on a silver or gold ground.

Border: on a green ground an intermittent wavy scroll bears alternately small palmettes and large palmettes flanked by two lanceolate leaves. The inner edging contains a reciprocal pattern of heart shapes in dark blue and orange; the outer edging, a wavy floral scroll on a yellow ground.

The ground of the field and the leaves of the border are brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk threads.

L. 6 ft. 9½ in.; w. 4 ft. 7¾ in.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

8 Rug Knotted in Silk

This rug is identical with number 7, except for slight differences in color.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

9 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: wavy bands forming trefoiled arches divide the field into various irregular compartments symmetrically arranged. Each compartment incloses a small oval medallion in light blue, dark blue, pink, or white flanked by half-palmettes in yellow, red, brown, and green. In the center of the field there is a lobed medallion in green inclosing leaves and a rosette. The compartments are alternately gold and silver and are filled with an all-over pattern of floral scrolls bearing palmettes, rosettes, and leaves in white, light brown, red-brown, green, blue, orange, and red. Amidst the scrolls are six Chinese cloud bands, two in brown and four in red.

Border: on a green ground arabesques with half-palmettes in gold and silver are interlaced with floral scrolls in orange which bear large palmettes, rosettes, and lanceolate leaves. The arabesques inclose rosettes on a red ground. The inner edging contains a wavy floral scroll on a yellow ground; the outer edging, a wavy floral scroll on a pink ground.

The compartments and many of the motives in the field are brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow threads.

L. 7 ft. ¼ in.; w. 4 ft. 5¼ in.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

10 Rug Knotted in Silk

Companion rug to number 9.
Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

11 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: arabesques in blue, pink, orange, brown, and green form compartments around a central quatrefoil medallion. The field has an all-over pattern of floral scrolls with palmettes and lanceolate leaves in white, yellow, pink, brown, orange, red, blue, and green on a gold ground.

Border: on a silver ground an intermittent wavy scroll bears alternately small palmettes and large palmettes flanked by lanceolate leaves. The inner edging contains S-motives in yellow on a black ground; the outer edging, a wavy floral scroll on a green ground.

The ground of the field is brocaded with silver-gilt strips wound around yellow silk; the ground of the border, with silver strips wound around white silk.

L. 6 ft. 8 in.; w. 4 ft. 7¼ in.
Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

12 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: a central medallion is formed by arabesques in yellow, blue, orange, and green. The field has an all-over pattern of arabesques and floral scrolls in white, yellow, orange, brown, blue, and green on a gold ground.

Border: on a silver ground an intermittent wavy scroll bears alternately small palmettes and large palmettes flanked by two lanceolate leaves. The inner edging contains floral scrolls on a dark blue ground; the outer edging, floral scrolls on an orange ground.

The ground of the field is brocaded with silver-gilt strips wound around yellow silk; the ground of the border, with silver strips wound around white silk.

L. 6 ft. 9 in.; w. 4 ft. 8 in.
Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

13 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: a central medallion is formed by arabesques in yellow, orange, brown, and blue on a silver ground. The field is covered with a pattern of floral scrolls and arabesques defining compartments in gold or silver.

Border: an intermittent arabesque scroll bears palmettes on a green ground. The inner edging contains a floral scroll on a gray ground; the outer edging, a floral scroll on an orange ground.

The compartments of the field are brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk.

L. 6 ft. 8 in.; w. 4 ft. 8¼ in.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

14 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: arabesques in white, pink, orange, green, and blue form compartments around a central medallion inclosing four large palmettes. The field is covered with floral scrolls bearing palmettes in yellow, pink, brown, orange, blue, and green on a ground of silver or gold.

Border: on a green ground are arabesques and floral scrolls bearing palmettes and rosettes. The inner edging contains heart shapes in yellow and orange; the outer edging, a floral scroll on a yellow ground.

The ground of the compartments in the field is brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk thread.

L. 6 ft. 11 in.; w. 4 ft. 7½ in.

Lent by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

15 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: in the center of the field is a small lobed medallion inclosing lily-like blossoms and a rosette. The pale green ground of the field is covered with arabesques and with delicate floral scrolls bearing leaves, rosettes, and palmettes in white, yellow, tan, blue, green, and red.

Border: on a light tan ground arabesques bearing half-palmettes interlace with floral scrolls. The inner edging contains floral scrolls on a gray ground; the outer edging, floral scrolls on a tan and blue ground.

L. 7 ft. 4 in.; w. 5 ft. 5¼ in. Illustrated.

Lent by Mrs. Rainey Rogers.

16 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: curved bands form rows of four-sided compartments inclosing floral scrolls which bear leaves, rosettes, and palmettes in yellow, blue, green, red, silver, and gold on pink, silver, or gold grounds.

Border: on a silver or gold ground an intermittent wavy scroll bears alternately small palmettes and large palmettes flanked by two lanceolate leaves. The edgings contain floral scrolls on a tan ground.

Several of the compartments and a few of the motives in the field and the ground of the border are brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk.

L. 13 ft. 4½ in.; w. 5 ft. 5¼ in.

Lent by Mrs. Rainey Rogers.

17 Rug Knotted in Silk

Companion rug to number 16.

L. 13 ft. 1 in.; w. 5 ft. 7¼ in.

Lent by Mrs. Rainey Rogers.

18 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: the orange-red field is ornamented with thirteen horizontal rows of arabesque palmettes connected by half-palmettes in white, green, yellow, blue, red, brown, silver, and gold.

Border: the border has a reciprocal pattern of trefoiled palmettes in green, red, yellow, silver, and gold. The inner edging contains reciprocal heart motives; the outer edging, a wavy floral scroll on a yellow ground.

Sections of the motives in the field and the border are

brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk.

L. 8 ft. 10½ in.; w. 4 ft. 10 in. Illustrated.

Lent by Horace Havemeyer.

19 Rug Tapestry-woven in Silk

Field: in the center is a large medallion inclosing a smaller medallion in red, blue, salmon, tan, yellow, black, and white, and in each corner is a quarter-medallion. The rest of the field is light tan, and is filled with symmetrically arranged scrolls bearing palmettes, lanceolate leaves, and small floral motives in the same colors and pink and green.

Border: on a blue or tan ground an intermittent wavy scroll bears palmettes, carnations, and buds in red, blue, white, salmon, green, and black. The inner edging is divided into compartments of various colors; the outer edging contains a wavy floral scroll on a tan ground.

Throughout the rug there are numerous traces of silver or silver-gilt strips wound around silk threads.

L. 7 ft. 7 in.; w. 4 ft. 7 in. Illustrated.

Lent by Horace Havemeyer.

20 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: floral scrolls and arabesque bands in light tan, green, red, blue, silver, and gold form a symmetrical all-over pattern on a gold ground.

Border: on a silver ground a floral scroll bears palmettes in yellow, blue, green, and red. The inner edging contains heart shapes in blue and tan; the outer edging, a floral scroll on a tan ground.

Many of the motives in the field and the ground of the border are brocaded with silver or silver-gilt strips wound around white or yellow silk.

Written in ink on the back of the rug there is a Polish inscription containing the name of the owner,

Wilkonski, the date, September 12, 1683, and the place of provenance, Vienna:[1]

A.D.WILKONSKI
XII Septembris 1683
z pod Wiednia

L. 6 ft. 8 in.; w. 4 ft. 6¼ in.

Lent by Mrs. William H. Moore.

21 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: the all-over pattern consists of four vertical rows of arabesques bearing palmettes in tan, blue, and red on a green ground. Stems with leaves and blossoms connect the four rows.

Border: on an orange ground an intermittent wavy scroll bears palmettes flanked by two lanceolate leaves. The border edgings contain wavy floral scrolls with rosettes.

L. 6 ft. 4 in.; w. 4 ft. 9 in.

Lent by the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia.

22 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: in the center is a quatrefoil medallion with peony palmettes. The rest of the field is divided by bands into irregular compartments in silver and tan. These are filled with an all-over pattern of floral scrolls bearing leaves and palmettes in blue, red, green, and tan.

Border: on a green ground appear interlaced arabesque bands in tan and silver bearing palmettes. The inner edging contains heart shapes in yellow and blue; the outer edging, a floral scroll on a pink ground.

The ground of several of the compartments in the field and many of the arabesques in the border are brocaded with silver strips wound around white silk.

[1] In 1683 the Polish king, Jan Sobieski, went to the rescue of Vienna which was being besieged by the Turks. The Turks were defeated and in their hasty retreat left many tents, decorated with Persian brocades and carpets, which fell into the hands of the victors. This rug is a part of the booty taken by the Poles.

L. 13 ft. 3 in.; w. 5 ft. 7 in.

Lent by the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia.

23 Rug Tapestry-woven in Silk

Field: a white ogee-shaped medallion with attached cartouches and a trefoiled pendant incloses a phoenix fighting a dragon, a fox, and a deer on a floral background. Each cartouche contains a pair of birds on a red ground. The sections of medallions in the corners of the field show Chinese *kilins* in orange on green grounds. The gold ground of the field is covered with floral scrolls bearing palmettes, birds, leaves, and rosettes, and is further ornamented with four pheasants. The colors are white, rose, ruby red, salmon red, orange, green, and blue.

Border: on a silver ground cartouches alternate with quatrefoil medallions connected by disks. The cartouches inclose lions, tigers, and deer on a blue ground; the quatrefoil medallions, lion masks on a gold ground. The edgings contain wavy floral scrolls on a red ground.

Throughout the rug there are numerous traces of silver strips wound around silk threads.

L. 8 ft. 7 in.; w. 4 ft. 4 in.

Lent by the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia.

24 Rug Tapestry-woven in Silk

Field: in the center of the dark green field is a coat of arms (probably Polish). The rest of the field is covered with arabesques and floral scrolls bearing palmettes, leaves, and blossoms in white, yellow, blue, orange, and brown.

Border: on a white ground, small medallions with palmettes are connected by intersecting arabesque bands in orange and blue overlaid with floral stems. The inner edging contains rosettes on a yellow ground; the outer edging, floral scrolls on a green ground.

Throughout the rug there are traces of silver strips wound around silk threads.

L. 7 ft.; w. 4 ft. 7 in.

Lent by the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia.

25 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: from the central motive of four palmettes within a lobed medallion in blue, yellow, and green, arabesques and floral scrolls bearing lanceolate leaves and half-palmettes spread out symmetrically over the ruby red field.

Border: on a blue ground an intermittent wavy scroll bears alternately small palmettes and large palmettes flanked by two lanceolate leaves. The colors are yellow, blue, red, green, and brown. The border edgings contain wavy floral scrolls on a yellow ground.

L. 9 ft. 2 in.; w. 5 ft. 6 in. Illustrated.

From the Museum Collection.

Acc. no. 10.103 (Hewitt Fund).

26 Rug Knotted in Silk

Field: a centrosymmetric composition of floral scrolls and arabesques in white, yellow, brown, salmon red, blue, and green covers the red field.

Border: on a green ground wavy scrolls in blue bear large palmettes and lanceolate leaves. The border edgings contain wavy floral scrolls on a yellow ground.

L. 6 ft. 7¼ in.; w. 6 ft. ½ in. Illustrated.

From the Museum Collection.

Acc. no. 17.120.143 (Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection).

27 Rug Tapestry-woven in Silk

Field: in the center is a large medallion containing palmettes in blue, salmon red, black, yellow, brown, green, and white; from it hang cartouches in brown and white and trefoil pendants. In each corner is a quarter-

medallion in blue with floral designs in salmon red, maroon, green, and tan. The rest of the field is ornamented with floral motives and lanceolate leaves symmetrically arranged in green, salmon, blue, brown, black, and white; the ground is gold.

Border: floral scrolls join palmettes, rosettes, and tulip-like flowers in brown, maroon, salmon red, tan, green, yellow, black, and white on a blue ground. The inner edging contains trefoils in white and brown; the outer edging, compartments in white, yellow, green, and brown on a salmon red ground.

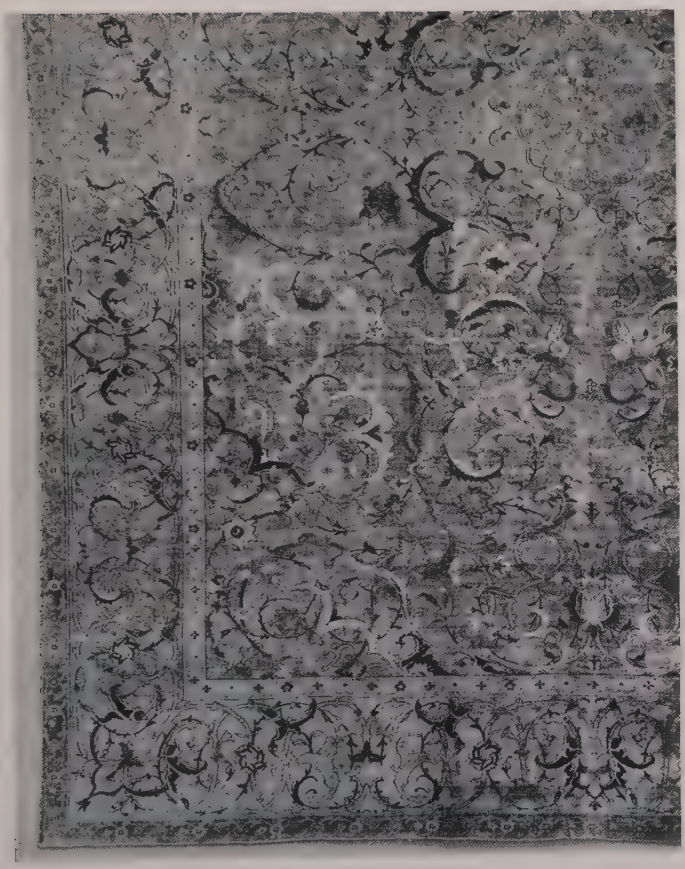
Throughout the rug there are traces of silver or silver-gilt strips wound around the silk threads.

L. 6 ft. 7 in.; w. 3 ft. 10½ in. Illustrated.

From the Museum Collection.

Acc. no. 17. 120.133 (Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection).

PLATES



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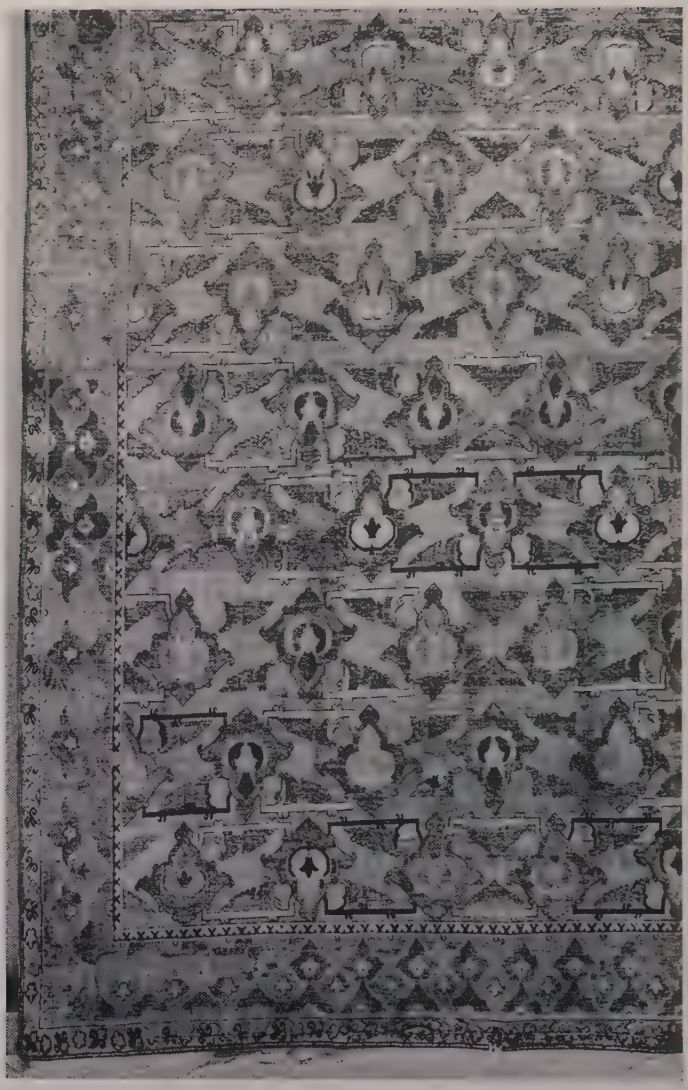

NO. 18

NO. 19

NO. 25

NO. 26

NO. 27

NO. 27. DETAIL TO SHOW TAPESTRY-WOVEN TECHNIQUE

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